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CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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HS Students rebel, leaders against racism

CHICAGO, February 18—Class struggle is in session at one racist high school. Black and Latin working-class youth are teaching a lesson in fightback.

Students refused to stand during the national anthem, causing some teachers to react with gutter racism. In protest, students organized a sit-in, got a racist teacher removed, and exposed the liberal misleaders. In short, they provided the kind of working-class leadership needed to change the world.

The international communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) extends a giant salute to these bold multiracial students for the antiracist example they are setting. It is working-class youth all over the world that are providing leadership and energy to the struggles against racism, sexism, environmental destruction, mass shootings, and deportations. Their revolutionary potential can hardly be understated.

Communist need to support, learn from, and offer leadership to these working-class youth. Connecting the struggles they are leading to an international movement and mass Party fighting to destroy racism and capitalism brings us all the closer to communist revolution and our collective liberation.

Stand for a racist anthem? Hell no!

On January 30 at Senn High School, students refused to stand for the national anthem during the school's Hispanic Heritage Assembly. At least three multiracial students, including the daughter of two PLP comrades, remained seated in order to protest the flag of the imperialist U.S. bosses and its racist symbolism. Specifically, they were protesting racist police terror, ICE raids and deportations, and the 500 years of racist oppression of Black workers.

This protest caused a physical education teacher, Robert Spurlin, to spew racist ideas at the students. He told a Black student that if she gets free lunch, then she "should be standing."

He told a Latin student that she "should go back to her country." This enraged the surrounding students. Other teachers, apologists for racism, intervened and threw the students out of the assembly.

Students organize a sit-in

The students exposed the racist nature of schools under capitalism, where racism against Black and Latin students is the norm, not the exception. For two weeks, the principal stalled and sat on the numerous complaints she received from students and parents.

The students were fed up and took matters into their own hands. They organized a mass multiracial sit-in on February 12, which received local and national coverage. Over 150 students chanted, "this is our school."

The principal and the district were forced to remove the racist gym teacher from the building on paid leave as they "carry on their investigation." The principal also reached a written agreement to several demands put forward by the students:

- More town halls to hear student voices
- Better information on how to



JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

OUR FIGHT

✰Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✰The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✰Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✰While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✰Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✰Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✰Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✰Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✰Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✰Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Democratic Party embraces racist, sexist Bloomberg

Billionaire Michael Bloomberg, a tried-and-true racist, sexist, and fascist of the internationalist main wing of the U.S. ruling class, is rising in the polls after spending $338 million on media ads—to date—in his bid for the presidency. Bloomberg's candidacy reveals the dilemma of the banks and multinational corporations that rule the U.S. When Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton to win the presidential election in 2016, it marked finance capital's loss of control over the Republican Party. Trump has mostly allied with the isolationist Small Fascists led by the Koch family, the "Fortress America" capitalist bosses who don't want to invest in a global war with China and/or Russia. As a former stock and bond trader who made his fortune by selling data to Wall Street, Bloomberg and his checkbook candidacy reflect a desperate bid by the main wing, the Big Fascists, to impose direct control over the elections and the state apparatus. But unfortunately for the bosses, Bloomberg brings a lot of negative baggage with him.

Over the last 30 years, the most powerful ruling class in history has been on an epic losing streak: two disastrous wars in the Middle East, a devastating economic crisis, and a stubborn challenge from the Koch faction. The main wing bosses have responded with intensifying fascism, from mass incarceration to mass deportations to record levels of kkkop murders of Black workers. Meanwhile, the rulers' ranks are divided, undisciplined and openly corrupt. Barely half of U.S. workers bother to vote for president. Alienation and disgust with the capitalist system is widespread and profound.

At the moment, finance capital's best bets to unseat Small Fascist Trump are three white men close to 80. Bernie Sanders is a fake leftist who backs U.S. imperialism and garners support among desperate young workers buried in debt. Joe Biden is a racist bumbler who has yet to come close to winning a primary in three presidential campaigns. Bloomberg is a richer and more disciplined version of Trump, with a personal fortune estimated at $64 billion, making him the eighth-richest person in the U.S. (Forbes). His well-documented history of outrageous racism and sexism will make him a tough sell for the younger workers the bosses will need to fight World War III.

Big Racists

The main wing capitalists have a long history of seeking Black loyalty while simultaneously launching vicious assaults on the Black working class. We can see this from the Civil War to World War II, from Ronald Reagan's War on Drugs to Barack Obama's 2008 Father's Day speech, where he peddled the old racist myth that the plight of Black workers was the fault of Black male irresponsibility (New York Times, 6/15/08).

Arch-racist Bloomberg is a shameful part of this tradition. As mayor of New York City, he unleashed the cops to stop and frisk innocent workers more than five million times during his 12 years in office. The vast majority of those terrorized and abused were Black and Latin males, "even though their white counterparts were twice as likely to be found with a gun, according to the New York Civil Liberties Union" (NYT, 11/17/19). Bloomberg arrogantly defended his Jim Crow policy right up until he decided to run for president last fall. If anything, he said, "we disproportionately stop whites too much, and minorities too little" (6/28/13 interview on WOR).

While Bloomberg is a Klansman in a three-piece suit, his racist approach to criminal injustice is part of the liberal Democratic Party tradition. Stop-and-frisk was a logical extension of the mass incarceration policies rooted in Clinton's Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act in 1994, "tough-on-crime legislation that was championed by [presidential candidate] Joe Biden and supported by Bernie Sanders" (Politico, 2/13).

There is also no shortage of older Black misleaders, from senior ministers like New York's Calvin Butts to the Congressional Black Caucus, lining up to pocket some of racist Bloomberg's cash and support his campaign. Among these class traitors is former Black Panther and Chicago hack Bobby Rush.

Big Sexists

Over the last four years, the Democratic Party has been posing as the anti-sexist savior of the working class by exposing Trump's crude sexism. But in reality, liberals' assaults on women may be worse. Since the 1980s, 64 women have brought sex discrimination and sexual harassment lawsuits against Bloomberg and his organizations (GQ, 2/13). According to the Washington Post, he told a pregnant employee to "kill" her unborn child and "talked kind of crudely about women all the time" (Washington Post, 2/15).

When Bloomberg helped to engineer the massive wave of gentrification in Black and Latin working-class neighborhoods, he disproportionately displaced women and families (NYT, 11/9/19).

Big Fascists

Bloomberg is used to suspending liberal democratic laws and rules, a hallmark of fascism. As New York's mayor, with the Democratic Party's blessing, he used his fat bankroll to change the term limits law and then buy himself a third term. More recently, the Democratic National Committee changed its rules to give Bloomberg a place in the February 19 debate, despite the fact that he essentially has just one donor: himself.

For years now, main wing liberals have championed direct ruling-class control over education through the heavily segregated charter school movement, where powerful bosses like Eli Broad or Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg privatize schools and run them on the taxpayers' dime without interference from elected school boards, teachers' unions, or parents. After Bloomberg won mayoral control over the New York City school system, the number of charter schools expanded from 18 to 183 under his administration (Politico, 1/20).

Bloomberg wants a national ID work card system based on DNA and fingerprints. He expanded camera surveillancein Manhattan, bragging "you're never going to know where all of our cameras are" (politico.com, 1/18). He gave drones to the NYPD and deployed the SkyWatch towers used at the U.S.-Mexico border to monitor Black and Latin neighborhoods. He spied on Occupy Wall Street protesters and sent police agents to snoop on Muslims up and down the East Coast (Politico, 1/18).

Before they can try to impose full-blown fascism on the working class, the bosses must get their own house in order. Bloomberg is showing a new willingness to discipline the capitalist ruling class. Though he'd opposed financial regulation and oversight in the past, "the candidate announced an ambitious financial policy plan on Tuesday that includes imposing a tax on financial transactions and toughening restrictions on risky banking practices…Perhaps the most surprising proposal, given the billionaire's close personal ties to Wall Street movers and shakers, is a plan for the Justice Department to create a dedicated team to fight corporate crime by "encouraging prosecutors to pursue individuals, not only corporations, for infractions" (NYT, 2/18).

Workers need communism: join PLP

Election-year rhetoric aside, the bosses' political parties always defend the capitalists' class interests. At the moment, Republicans and Democrats are serving different wings of the U.S. ruling class. But both parties represent anti-worker sexism, racism, and fascism.

The Progressive Labor Party seeks to champion the interests of the international working class. By joining the class struggle in our areas of work, by expanding the readership of CHALLENGE and most of all by recruiting workers and youth to our revolutionary communist organization, we help the working class prepare to turn imperialist war into class war and lead armed struggle for a dictatorship of the proletariat. Because the working class is international, we are organized as one international party dedicated to communism, and nothing less. Don't vote, join PLP!✪

Smash the ICE gestapo and its profiteers





Hundreds protest anti-immigrant racism and the Thomson Reuters corporation for its fascist collaboration with ICE. To end these racist atrocities, we must abolish the capitalist state terror machine.

NEW YORK CITY, February 16—At least 30 were arrested in Times Square as antiracists protested against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the tech companies that profit off of the racist terror against undocumented workers.

Nearly 500 antiracists protested in a march sponsored by Close the Camps/Cosecha against the Thomson Reuters Corporation. One protester said, "We will not remain silent as corporations profit from human suffering" (NY Post, 2/16). Such is the nature of a system defined by profit, exploitation, and theft of labor.

They chanted, "Brick by brick, wall by wall, we will make the system fall." That system is capitalism. It will fall when we smash it with communist revolution under the leadership of Progressive Labor Party.

Passersby looked on; many chanted along. Members and friends of Progressive Labor Party (PLP), some active in Close the Camps/Cosecha in New York and New Jersey, played an active role in the march. Nearly two hundred people took the communist newspaper, CHALLENGE.

The protest occurred just as Racist-in-Chief Donald Trump announced he will unleash ICE SWAT teams, units from the Southern border, on the workers and youth of New York City and other metropolitan hubs across the U.S.

Against such gutter racism, workers can and will fight back. We can beat back this racist attack, as long as we expose both Republican and Democrat leaders for the misleaders that they are.

Tech serves gestapo

Thomson Reuters and its subsidiaries give ICE access to numbers of databases in exchange for tens of millions of dollars. According to ICE, Reuters provides license plate scanning data and "continuous monitoring and alert service that provides real-time jail booking data to support the identification and location" of immigrant workers (VICE, 11/11/19).

This data feeds the gestapo deportation machine that tracks, captures, and terrorizes immigrant workers—many of whom are children—like animals. These are similar tactics used by slave catchers and the Ku Klux Klan who hunted down escaping enslaved workers in the 1800s. What the capitalist state did to Black workers then is what they are doing to mainly Latin workers now.

By collaborating with ICE, Thomson Reuters is following the same grisly racist path of IBM, which powered the Nazis. The U.S. tech company played "a pivotal role in the Holocaust —all six phases: identification, expulsion from society, confiscation, ghettoization, deportation, and even extermination" (Huffington Post, 2/27/2012).

Of course, Thomson Reuters is just one of numerous technology companies using their innovations to serve bipartisan state terrorism. "Hewlett Packard Enterprise…Microsoft, Motorola Solutions…Palantir [Amazon, Dell, Canon, UPS, LinkedIn, and more] all have active contracts with…ICE" (NBC News, 6/20/2018). And yes, IBM continues to upload its legacy as a fascist collaborator, with the Border Patrol this time.

Capitalism is the crime

The U.S. gestapo criminalizes workers and children, destroys lives, breaks families, and sheds blood. The raids also succeed in terrorizing and pacifying countless more workers.

Workers and children who risk their lives to cross a capitalist-made border are not criminals; they are refugees. They are our sisters and brothers who have the same aspirations as all other members of our class—to get our needs met against an impossible system.

The real crime is committed by the U.S. imperialists who created borders and the economic situation forcing workers to escape in the first place. The countries—Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador—that workers mostly hail from "provide the cheap labor to cut the sugar cane, haul the coffee and bananas, and slave in sweatshops and the kitchens of tourist resorts" (Huffington Post, 6/24/14).

Know your enemy

Workers and youth who stand up to this racism must be encouraged. The challenge is to turn the antiracist rage of protesters into recognizing the need for an international movement and revolutionary Party against capitalism. If the antiracist protesters unite under the banner of the racist Democratic Party, the working class is under greater danger (see page 2). Liberal politicians and bosses are not friends of the working class. They seek to exploit the desperation of workers in order to build allegiance to the very system that oppresses us.

Smash borders and profit

To eliminate racist deportations, we need to abolish borders once and for all and create a society that is run by and for the working class. No politician can do that. Only a communist party, Progessive Labor Party, can.

As Langston Hughes wrote, the fight is the same everywhere (see page 8). PLP fights for multiracial unity among all workers across all borders. Divisions by race and nationality, economically and politically weaken the entire working class. Only a united class under the leadership of Black and Latin workers in the international PLP has the power to break this system, brick by brick. Join us.✪

Chicago

PLP celebrates Black communist leadership

CHICAGO, February 8—Around 70 people came together on the city's south side this evening to celebrate Progressive Labor Party's (PLP) ongoing tradition of recognizing and taking leadership from working-class Black communists. A broad age-range of workers attended, from students in their teens to people with four or more decades of fighting this fascist system.

Features of our third annual Black and Red Dinner were heart-felt, personal and political stories from two comrades, and attendance from a greater number of younger people who responded to our message of antiracism and the leadership of Black workers being a key part of our Party's fight for communist-led worker power.

The program was engaging, and those who joined us for the first time noted that we didn't just give lip-service to Black comrades leading the work. It is a stance proven by action that we carry out as a necessary part of worldwide communist revolution.

An ongoing tradition of communist Black leadership

For the dinner's keynote speech, a comrade presented the history of the antiracist line of the Party, and recognition of the continued importance of leadership from Black workers to our movement. He talked about the how early communist theorist and revolutionary Karl Marx was very much influenced by communal societies he studied from all over the world. Marx was outspoken about the enslavement and continued oppression of Black people in the United States, noting in his influential book *Capital* that "Labor in a white skin cannot emancipate itself where it is branded in a black skin."

The comrade went on to highlight the leadership of Black workers here in Chicago, and around the world. Writers and activists, noted communists and those influenced by communist theories/theorists, such as Franz Fanon, Angela Davis, the founders of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, Claudia Jones, Harry Haywood, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Lorraine Hansberry, and more. They all wrote about recognizing that the fight for liberation from racism is linked to class oppression internationally.

The second speaker of the night talked about her influences to both join the Party in college, and now taking on further responsibility for leading the work. Noting the mentoring she received from another Black comrade, she said she was made more confident in her abilities because of the example set by the people who won her to PLP. She dedicated her speech to her teenage daughter—herself a maturing antiracist fighter—passing encouragement through the generations.

Working-class inspired music and games

One of the highlights of the event was the contagiously-enthusiastic participation of about twenty youth present. During an entertaining songwriting activity, a mixed group of teens, comrades, and adult workers came up with powerful and inspiring lyrics that were also bilingual, to a tune of artist Lil Nas X's "Old Town Road (Remix):

*We got the workers in the front, bosses on their a**, Power to the People, Power to the Working Class!*

Fighting for our rights, every day and night, power in our sight, we will all unite…

The bosses can't tell us nothing, they can't tell us nothing...

Obreros unidos, ¡jamás serán vencidos! Arriba, abajo — ¡Los jefes al carajo! (Workers united, will never be defeated! Up, down – Bosses, go to hell!)

The entire room erupted in applause!

Another fun activity the event organizers put together was a version of Jeopardy, with all of the categories being about Black communists, including historical events (such as PLP beating down the Nazis and integrating Chicago's Marquette Park in the 1970s) and personal quotes. Once again, the high school students in the room took the lead, answering the most questions, hands down. It was truly inspirational to watch these youth—the future of our Party—embracing antiracist history and politics.



Antiracist action and theory

During this election season, the liberals who have already been proven to be the main threat for our class, are willing to promise every concession imaginable. What they will never follow through on is true freedom from the continued humiliation and death of racism, sexism, capitalism and imperialism.

In our Party's document, *Black Workers' Leadership: Key Revolutionary Force* (see www.plp.org) we explain the need to fight racism in all aspects of our work: "Racism is the main tool the ruling class has to divide the working class." We understand that racism and capitalism go hand in hand. Voting for liberals or whatever "lesser-evil" presents itself under capitalism will never free us from their destructive effects. The exploitation of Black workers worldwide had been integral to the growth of this murderous system.

The historical fightback and continued leadership of Black workers in our ranks has strengthened our understanding and actions. Those who have experienced the worst of this system must give leadership in tearing it down. Join us in rising up and fighting back!✪

Role of soldiers during war

Since capitalism manufactures profit wars where young people are ordered to kill and die to defend the bosses, the Progressive Labor Party's job is to respond to this horror by winning workers to end capitalist war through communist revolution. Our aim is to win workers to fight the bosses, rather than fight one another. To do this we must lead class struggle and fight back against capitalist ideas within the bosses' armed forces.

From the Vietnam War to the present, PLP members have been in the bosses' military and among many struggles we helped win the freedom of a Black anti-war soldier falsely accused of killing two officers in Vietnam. Later we organized support for marines in Camp Pendleton who broke up a Ku Klux Klan meeting.

Uncertain of the potential outcomes, young communists deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan and fought cynicism by acting with communist convictions. We won enlisted troops to act against the actions of a racist officer. We aided a wounded Iraqi army soldier that other medics refused to treat. We spoke up when officers belittled and racially harassed the lower enlisted. We expressed our opposition to occupation to close friends while on missions intended to maintain the occupation. We shared CHALLENGE and resisted the U.S. military's racism against workers abroad.

All these actions impacted working class troops in positive ways. For some, communism became a good thing instead of a bad one. Others became open to the idea of a revolutionary movement. A handful of working-class troops took leadership from our party instead of the command, even if it was only for a few short moments. At least one comrade chose not to use deadly force when the command encouraged it. Workers are the ones who suffer when the bosses send us to war. The only way to make a communist difference on the battlefield is to bring our ideas with us.

Fighting the bosses' ideas inside the bosses military isn't easy, though it isn't necessarily easy anywhere given how hard the bosses fight to keep control of capitalism. We've made mistakes of all kinds. But we are always learning and the experiences we've gained by fighting against capitalist ideas inside the military has helped keep our Party on the road to communist revolution.✪

75th anniversary

Red Army liberated the Auschwitz death camp

May, 1945 was the end of one of the most horrendous capitalist systems the world has suffered. The fascist Nazi government of Germany led by Adolph Hitler was defeated by the communist government of the Soviet Union led by Joseph Stalin. Today there are many anticommunist lies about World War II, the Nazi period, and especially about the role of the then-socialist Soviet Union in smashing the fascist German forces. As we commemorate the liberation of the Auschwitz Concentration camp let's refute some of those lies.

Liberals and conservatives lie about World War II

The capitalist media never stops rewriting history. In the Public Broadcasting System's series "The Messengers," one of the episodes begins with someone saying: "My biggest mistake was to believe that the Red Army won World War II" (PBS, 1995). Actually the Red Army did win World War II. Nine out of 10 German casualties were at the hands of the Red Army.

The liberal PBS is not alone in lying about WW II. In 1995 the "historian" of the U.S. House of Representatives, Christina Jeffrey, was fired when it was publicized that in 1986 she had criticized a school curriculum on the Holocaust by complaining that the perspectives of the Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan were not included in it (New York Times, 1/11/95).

The truth about the Nazis

In 1933, Hitler took power with the support of most of the German bosses. He began what he thought was going to be the "Thousand-Year Reich [empire]". He ordered the building of the Dachau, Oranienburg, and Buchenwald concentration camps. These were the first of what was to become 900 big and small concentration camps that existed until the end of the war. One of Hitler's first decrees introduced the concept of Schutzhaft – preventive imprisonment of "enemies of the state." First, last, and always, these were mainly communists.

Hitler was very specific about the role of these camps. "Brutality inspires respect … The masses need someone to inspire fear and make them tremble and submissive … I don't want concentration camps to become family housing. Terror is the most efficient political instrument ... Those who are discontent and disobey us will think twice before confronting us if they know what is waiting for them in the concentration camps."



The Red Army liberated Auschwitz

Twelve years later, the Third Reich's "thousand year" reign of terror was cut short by the communist movement. Around 3 p.m. on January 27, 1945, Soviet troops of the First Ukrainian Front of the advancing Red Army, led by Marshal Ivan S. Konev, saw a sign that read: "Arbeit Macht Frei" – "Work Makes You Free" – on the top of the main gate of Auschwitz. The Nazis called these death camps "labor camps." These troops saw with their own eyes what up to then was only a suspicion based on messages smuggled out from the concentration camps: the incarceration and systematic elimination of Jewish and Romani workers, and political "deviates" (read: pro-communists). It was all part of the plan created by the top leadership of the Third Reich, which murdered millions (El Mundo, 1/8/95).

The Red Army troops found 5,000 prisoners. These prisoners were left behind by the Nazis because they were too weak to move (and, in spite of the efforts by the Red Army to save them, many died). A few days earlier, knowing the Red Army was getting closer to Auschwitz, Hitler ordered the camp closed. On January 18, the Nazi SS (Schutzstaffel-elite Nazi squadron)–Hitler's killer-troops—led the "March of Death" of 60,000 Auschwitz prisoners to Buchenwald, another death camp. Thousands of prisoners died on this march.

But the United States had delayed entering World War II for at least a year. They were hoping the Nazis and the Soviet Union would weaken each other. So the 42nd and 45th Divisions of the U.S. Army did not get to the Buchenwald concentration camp until April 11, just a few weeks before the Red Army liberated Berlin and ended the war. But the 5,000 prisoners that remained at Buchenwald had organized a rebellion and had killed most of the SS guards. The same thing happened at Dachau when at 9 a.m. on April 29, dozens of prisoners stopped the SS men from eliminating all the inmates by fighting them. It was not until nine hours later, at 6 p.m., that the 42nd and 45th Divisions entered Dachau and joined the fight, which lasted until the early morning of April 30. 30,000 survived the order, issued by Heinrich Himmler, chief of Hitler's SS, to kill all the prisoners. But it was the rebelling prisoners that saved these lives. Many more would have been saved if the U. S. had not delayed entering the war.

The Soviet Union defeated the Nazis

Today the capitalist regimes in Poland, Ukraine, Finland, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, deny that the populations of these lands were "liberated" at all (though Jewish organizations continue to insist that the Red Army were indeed liberators). Everything is being done to excuse the Polish, British, French, and U.S. capitalist rulers, who sabotaged all efforts to stop Hitler. Instead, these capitalist rulers urged Hitler to invade the Soviet Union and put a stop to the communist movement, and the socialist Soviet Union, which did everything possible to stop the Nazis and whose troops ultimately beat the fascist scum.✪

Antiracist students deserve a communist world

Continued from page 1

report offending teachers and staff

- More signs and posters communicating "our" values
- Cultural training for all staff

To make the fight a mass issue, students also plan to circulate a petition online to other schools and workplaces. Fighting for these demands can build a culture of fightback for future attacks at the school, as well as expose the limits of antiracism under capitalism.

Liberal bosses try to smother fightback

The liberal capitalist misleaders will only ultimately steer their struggle into deadends, if not smother it entirely. The liberal principal is already trying to stifle and control the antiracist anger of these working-class rebels.

A clear example of liberal racism at the school is the demographics of the elite International Baccalaureate (IB) program teaching staff, which is mainly white. The majority of the student rebels come from the other programs at the school.

The rebels are told that they are not as smart as the IB students and consequently they are treated worse. Every day all students go through metal detectors and some have their possessions searched. In reality, the rebels demonstrate a greater understanding of capitalism. Their leadership at the school can attest to that. Meanwhile, the IB students are more likely to be brainwashed and bought into the racist divisions of the system.

Worthless words from union misleaders

Be it metal detectors, racist teachers, or union leaders and politicians who enforce deplorable learning conditions, Black and Latin students get attacked by racism on the daily.

In response to the attack on the antiracist students, the supposedly militant leadership of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) could only meekly offer through their spokesperson that the union expects "tolerance and inclusivity" from its members and all CPS staff (Block Club Chicago, 2/13).

Mayor Lightfoot stomps on past fightback

New racist liberal mayor Lori Lightfoot is carrying on the ruthless tradition of her Democratic predecessors as she attacks the working class of the City. Whatever her self-proclaimed "progressive" credentials, she fought tooth and nail during last year's education worker strike against increasing funding and staffing in the mostly Black and Latin public school system. Meanwhile, she was more than happy to hand out over a billion dollars in workers taxes to finance private real estate developments in the City.

By attacking the strikers, Lightfoot attacked the ones who will get hurt the most—students.

We can never count on liberal politicians and union leaders to give the kind of anti-capitalist leadership and communist education that the international working-class needs and deserves.

All the more important to win working-class youth such as these Senn students to fight to abolish racism, something impossible under capitalism.

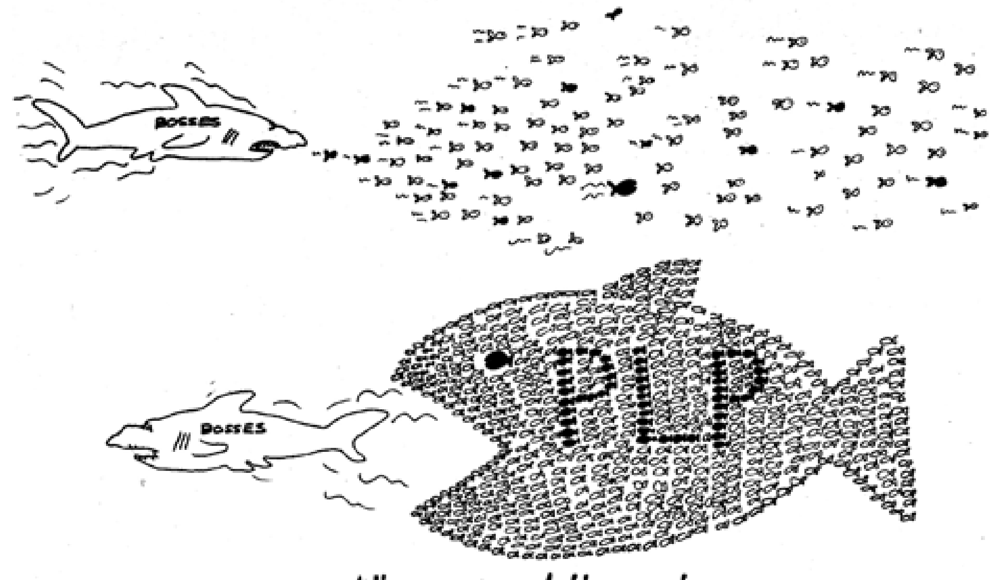
Carrying on the fight

These students are correctly protesting the racist nature of capitalist society and the Party must win them to continue their struggle. These liberal rulers run a devastatingly racist society and system. The students at Senn are carrying on and helping build a spirited movement led by working-class students from major U.S. cities such as Brooklyn and Los Angeles, to the schools of Paris and New Delhi and all over the world that are fighting back.

One more red salute to the Senn students! Stay tuned to this struggle!✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.



Why we need the party

ICE thugs terrorize, workers organize

On February 6, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) thugs went to arrest an undocumented worker from Mexico in Brooklyn, without a warrant or even identifying themselves. When he resisted, they tased and pepper sprayed him, and when the 26-year-old son of his partner tried to intervene, ICE shot him in the face. Both men required hospitalization, and ICE even interfered with their treatment and family contact at the hospital.

As soon as local antiracists heard the news, they set up a vigil at the hospital until late that night and resumed it the next day. Many groups, including the New Sanctuary Coalition and Close the Camps/Cosecha NY were involved, and a press conference was held at the hospital Friday morning. Later that afternoon a large demonstration was held in which health workers from the hospital participated.

The next day, a demonstration of about 100 people was held in downtown Manhattan. There was also a large action demanding legalization of all immigrants, an end to deportations, and the end of business contracts with ICE (see page 3).

Although politicians spoke at these rallies, at least one group, Close the Camps/Cosecha, disavows politicians and relies on rank and file action to make a difference.

Some members of Progressive Labor Party in New York City are active with these groups. This is a broad movement that involves many young and open-minded people—a good place to get involved and where we raise that the oppression of immigrants functions to not only terrorize and super-exploit these workers, but to also lower wages for all workers.

Most important, anti-immigrant ideas, like all racist and sexist ideas, serve to weaken and divide the working class—a necessity for capitalism.

Ultimately we must try and convince our new friends that although we fight militantly for reforms, capitalism itself must be destroyed.

★★★★★

Black and Latin solidarity in the face of racist murder

The Los Angeles Police Department murdered 34-year-old Alex Flores on November 19, 2019. When the bosses murder our class sisters and brothers, they also potentially plant the seeds of their own destruction—in this case, that's working-class unity of Black and Latin workers. Recently, Progressive Labor Party organized coast-to-coast solidarity (from Brooklyn to Los Angeles) against the Klan in blue. The following letter is from a Brooklyn-based worker whose family member was murdered by the police in 2012. The letter exemplifies, among other things, the leadership that working-class women can give to our class. Fighting back for a communist world is the only antidote to racist police murders.

In meeting Amanda [family member of Alex Flores], I didn't know what to expect. I wanted to make sure that I shared my experience as best as I could, to make sure that she or no one else ever goes through what I did. Though it was easy to communicate and relate with her and her family, I was overwhelmed with emotions. Up until speaking to them, I never realized that I was so experienced and immune to everything I've gone through, and that the little tips I was able to give them, could have such a great impact.

Though they may have seemed insignificant, they hold a lot of weight in the healing process. After the morning meeting, there was a screening of the documentary *Profiled* where 22 high school students attended and we all had a panel discussion afterwards.

In this discussion, students spoke about their own experiences with the murder of their siblings, and everyone asked questions to further the discussion.

After the discussion Amanda and I bonded again, privately. She thanked me for traveling so far, and knowing that she had support from someone that experienced the same thing, and felt the same emotions was heart-warming. It made her feel less alone, and more supported. This was a very eye-opening experience for not only Amanda and me, but everyone who attended, in that it showed each and every one of us that we can all find warmth in this cold world.

★★★★★

'Strangle the baby in the cradle'

I was impressed with the Feb. 19 article on how the working class defended their socialist system as the Red Army smashed the Nazis at Stalingrad in World War II. I would add two more points.

Firstly, anti-communists always rant how the Bolshevik Revolution "caused" thousands of deaths. Actually, 18,000 people died in 1917 to establish workers' power. But when 17 capitalist powers—including the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Spain, Poland, and the rest—invaded the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1925 to try to crush the Revolution, that anti-communist war led to the slaughter of 250 times as many people. Thus 4.5 million workers and peasants died defending the revolution. So much for the "murderous communists."

Secondly, when capitalists fight it out in imperialist wars for resources, land, and their "right" to exploit as many workers as possible—as they did in the two World Wars and a whole series of wars since then—that's a fight among bosses for profit supremacy. But when the communist-led international working class fights to overthrow the profit system, then the whole capitalist world recognizes it's a threat to their entire system and they unite to maintain it, which is what led to the killing of those 4.5 million.

No wonder when the Bolsheviks took power that arch-imperialist Churchill perceived the threat to ALL the bosses and told the capitalist world it needs to "strangle the baby in the cradle."

★★★★★

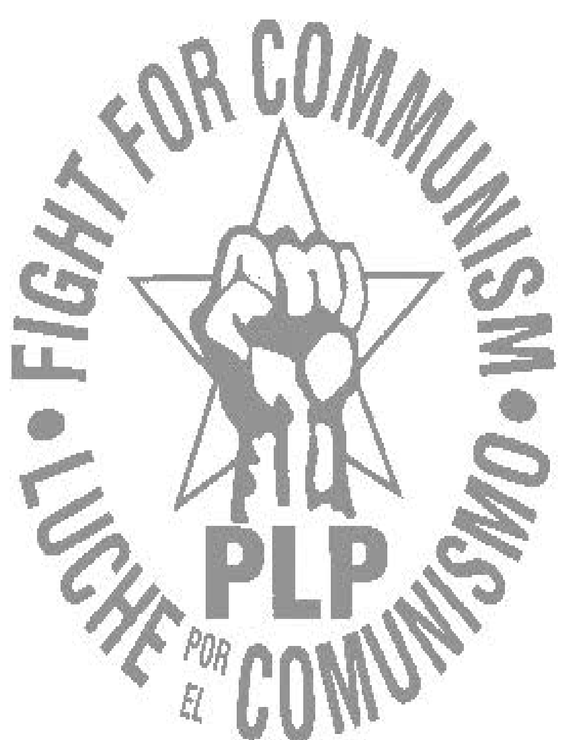
Shift in Mideast relations on display

The Middle East article (2/19) titled "Trump's Israeli Apartheid Plan, Weakens U.S. Imperialism" was generally correct in pointing out U.S. weakness and the inability of the U.S. ruling class to control developments in the Middle East.

The article states that none of the Mideast capitalists vying for power would accept the plan. However, both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Blue and White Party chair Benny Gantz factions in Israel are and Saudi Arabia appears to be more or less going along. The following excerpt is from an Israeli newspaper, Hamodia (1/30):

> *A tectonic shift in relations quietly underway for years now was on full display as representatives of Gulf Arab states attended President Donald Trump's unveiling of an Israeli-Palestinian plan...*
>
> *The audience at the White House, when President Trump presented the plan alongside Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, included … ambassadors of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman, who posed for a photo at the White House ceremony for the plan.*
>
> *From the Arab perspective, however, Saudi Arabia's reaction was the one most closely watched. The kingdom expressed support for the Trump administration's efforts, but did not send its ambassador to attend the ceremony.*
>
> *The Saudi response was also significant for what it didn't say — the kingdom did not endorse the plan, but also made no explicit mention of long-held Arab demands for a Palestinian state with eastern Yerushalayim as its capital.*
>
> *Rather, Saudi Arabia encouraged Palestinians to start "direct peace negotiations," essentially urging the Palestinians to accept the White House's framework as the starting point for talks.*

★★★★★



Coronavirus article left out two things

The article "Coronavirus, An Opening For Fascism And War" (2/19) deals with a difficult, fast-developing crisis. The following gives a sharper picture of the class-versus-class and imperialist-versus-imperialist dynamics at work.

First, the World Health Organization (WHO) is no longer purely an arm of the U.S. world order. China has pushed into several United Nations agencies as befits an expanding monopoly capitalist power. The chief of the WHO leans to China, which is capitalist China. When he recommended against travel restrictions, he gave no health science reason. Following what China wanted him to say, he declared, "There is no reason for measures that unnecessarily interfere with international travel and trade." The Chinese government itself attacked New Zealand for imposing travel restrictions on the grounds it would economically isolate China. The Chinese government has similarly objected to prudent restrictions by Italy and Australia. Second, there is enormous inequality in China. The numeric indicator of it, the Gini coefficient, is estimated to be close to the U.S. level. Hundreds of millions of the most exploited workers are migrants. They leave small villages, go to cities, and do the grunt work in construction, food delivery, and assembly-line sweatshops run by domestic and welcomed foreign capitalists.

These two facts probably go a long way to explain how the new virus is becoming a major threat to the working class.

★★★★★

Book review

Denial of history to peddle bourgeois socialism

The cover of Economics professor R. D. Wolff's latest book, *Understanding Socialism* features a red rose as a symbol of socialist workers struggles indicating that change can come peacefully. This rejects the historic red flag used worldwide today that symbolized the bloodstained bed sheets carried by workers from their deadly battles against their capitalist oppressors.

Wolff describes the two major anti-socialist purges of the 20th century as European fascism and the U.S.-led post World War II cold war. These were in fact capitalist attempts to prevent further worldwide communist revolutions that had already expropriated enormous property, profits, privileges, and power from capitalists since the 1917 Russian working class revolution and founding of the Soviet (workers' councils) Union.

FDR and socialists save capitalism

Wolff says that the leader of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin's socialism was a harsh, political dictatorship and praises U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) for his "embrace of socialism" during the Great Depression of 1929-41. During that period of international capitalist collapse, the Soviet Union was the only country with full employment and production while in the U.S. tens of millions were unemployed, homeless, hungry, and marching in the streets for revolution. When FDR sent army tanks against workers occupying Ford auto plants, the workers threatened to burn the factories down if one shot was fired at them. Fearing another 1917 revolution, FDR ran to his capitalist bosses and got them to provide the working class with New Deal benefits in exchange for outlawing communist politics in their unions. Socialists supported the capitalists during this economic crisis helping them survive depression and revolution.

The Soviet Union was the world's first attempt to build a communist society where everyone was needed and no one was left out. It was a society that fought racism and sexism. The Soviet Union never achieved a communist society because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system like wages and privileges. They also lost millions of their most communist workers in WWII when the Soviet Union's mighty Red Army destroyed 80 percent of the Nazi armies, the world's most powerful capitalist military, saved Europe from becoming a Nazi colony and showed the power of an organized working class society to the world that still makes capitalism tremble.

Wolff equates communists with dictatorship. He says they oppose democracy and freedom without defining those terms. The present U.S. champions of democracy and freedom have 1,000 military bases in almost 100 countries that support the sanctioning and bombing into submission of any country that resists domination. It would seem that Wolff opposes dictatorship unless it is coming from the capitalist class.

Socialism preserves inequality

Socialism engages in economic and reform struggles, but its essence and practice has been to enable capitalists to hold onto power during economic crisis, wars, and revolutions. Wolff says, "where once socialist parties represented opposition to capitalism, they have become parties advocating a kinder, gentler private capitalism with a mixture of state capitalism." Wolff says the socialist principle is "from each according to ability, to each according to their work." Translated into capitalist economics that means managers and professionals can make hundreds or thousands of times what a worker is paid. This explains why socialist China has the most billionaires and why capitalist world inequality exists where one percent own more than 99 percent of the wealth that workers produce.

The communist principle is 'from each according to ability, to each according to need.' Translated into communist economics that means those with greater needs like poorer communities, large families or those with medical problems would receive more.

Capitalism's socialist allies try to prevent the primary source of communist power which is the working class's understanding and implementation of communist ideas. Communism requires a communist movement and revolutionary struggles led by today's communist Progressive Labor Party to end capitalism.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from the capitalist press that might be of use for our readers

NYT=New York Times

GW= Guardian Weekly

Another capitalist killer: deaths of despair

NYT, 2/8 — …Suicide rates are at a record high in the post-World War II era, and more Americans die every two weeks from drugs, alcohol and suicide — "deaths of despair" — than died in 18 years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

These deaths are symptoms of a larger economic malaise for working-class Americans…. New research finds that 20 million Americans… describe all 30 of the last 30 days as "bad mental health days."

"These men and women report in effect that every day of life is a bad day…" said… a Dartmouth economist who conducted the research…. Low-income Americans also report levels of physical pain impairing their lives that are higher than reported by wealthier Americans….One-third of Americans say that they have been in pain "often" or "very often" in the last four weeks.

"Some of the pain probably results from a lack of universal health care. Millions…endure constant toothaches….

In effect…a Social Great Depression for millions….Even during the Great Depression, life expectancy rose strongly, while in three of the last four years it fell because of deaths of despair…. It is these working-class Americans, white and black alike, who have seen earnings collapse, family structure disintegrate and mortality climb. These Americans are earning less on average, adjusted for inflation, than their counterparts in the 1970s….Trump has exacerbated the pain by chipping away at access to health care. Some 400,000 children have lost health insurance….

Almost half of Americans aged 25 and over with only a high school diploma are no longer in the labor force. Meanwhile, the central fact of America today is…its profound inequity.

U.S. students' growing homelessness

NYT, 2/4 — More than 1.5 million public school students nationwide…were homeless… during the 2017-18 school year, the most recent data available….

It was the highest number recorded in more than a dozen years, and…reflected a growing problem that could negatively affect children's academic performance and health….[and] developmental delays….[The]…findings came as a housing affordability crisis sweeps the nation and homelessness continues to rise….

The 2017-18 number was more than double the nearly 680,000 homeless students reported in 2004-05, the first school year examined….More than 102,000 reported staying in…abandoned buildings and cars….

…Barbara Duffield,…director of SchoolHouse Connection….said a lack of affordable housing, the opioid and methamphetamine addiction crises, and…a factory shutting down, leaving parents unemployed and unable to pay rent…all influence the rise in homeless students….

"…The lack of affordable housing," she said…. really is the biggest issue…."

Ms, Duffield said many students are often "living in fear and shame." Some families do not report homelessness because they think it would constitute child abuse or neglect.

Dry wells, poisonous water, & the deep roots of U.S. racism

NYT — Bertha Mae Beavers remembers…stories…about the promises of California….so she said goodbye to her family of sharecroppers in Oklahoma and set out for a piece of it.

For decades she labored in the Central Valley's vast cotton and grape fields…..Looking back, Ms. Beavers,…90 this year, has sometimes wondered why she left home at all. It was all the same trouble, she said.

…During the early 20th century, tens of thousands of black people…came to California's far country…from the Cotton Belt and the Dust Bowl.

And as in other parts of the United States, black migrants were met with Jim Crow-style racism: "Whites Only" signs, curfews and discriminatory practices by banks. Often, the only places black families could settle were on arid acres on the outskirts of cultivated farmland — …where Ms. Beavers raised children in "a two-bedroom shack" with no bathrooms or running water.

… "There were just about two houses and the rest were in tents, just tents…we had no water for years…."

Today, the legacy of segregation reverberates underground, through old pipes, dry wells and soil tainted by shoddy septic systems. Lack of access to clean drinking water remains a problem…and low-income communities are disproportionately affected. As many as 350,000 people lack access to potable water in the San Joaquin Valley alone..... Many people…call it the Appalachia of the West….

…These small towns are now predominantly Latino and are…the very first to lose water when drought comes. When the water does flow, it is often tainted by arsenic and other chemicals…. Race and poverty were key variables in predicting access to clean drinking water and sanitation…. [for] millions of the most vulnerable people in the country — low-income people in rural areas, black and Latin people, tribal communities, immigrants….

…In the late 1800s…local farmers recruited black farmworkers from the South….Cities responded with racist policies which segregated black people either through laws or outright violence….

"That's why these communities exist….They are the direct response to Jim Crow practices in the San Joaquin Valley going back to the 19th century" [said a lecturer…at Fresno State College]…. In Tevisto today, one shallow well contaminated with cancer-causing chemicals provides water for 350 people….Residents are told not to drink the water, but it is likely people do so because they cannot afford enough bottled water….Through a process called "selective annexation," many low-income communities are excluded from city limits of expanding towns….For now, they intend to continue fighting and organizing.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY LANGSTON HUGHES

A COMMUNIST WRITER & FIGHTER



Hughes giving testimony in 1954 before the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

Capitalism
by Langston Hughes

Ship
Going nowhere
Old wreckage
The sea
Has not yet
Swallowed—
But will swallow

He was an antiracist, a fighter, and a Black communist. Langston Hughes (1901-1967) both reflected and shaped the history of his time. Promoting multiracial unity and internationalism, Hughes serves as an inspiration for antiracists and communists everywhere.

A fighter

A key figure in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, Hughes moved to the left during the "red decade" of the 1930s, when he worked tirelessly with the Communist Party (CPUSA) to free the Scottsboro Boys—nine Black youths falsely accused of raping two white women—from legal lynching ("Scottsboro, Ltd."). He hailed Communist Party led multiracial unionism ("Open Letter to the South"), praised the uprooting of racism in Soviet Central Asia, and reported on the multiracial Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War (I Wonder as I Wander).

He later nurtured the militancy of the Civil Rights Movement ("Freedom Train") and the emergence of post-colonial African literature. While Hughes's political organizing was primarily in his writing, his life was threatened when he toured the U.S. South giving poetry readings in support of the Scottsboro Boys, and he was almost killed by a fascist-fired mortar shell in Spain.

Poems of communist virtues

The first Black U.S. author to make a living entirely from his writings, Hughes published some 35 books, ranging from novels and short stories to plays, autobiography to journalism, musicals to children's books. His Chicago Defender newspaper columns featuring the forthright opinions of the fictional Harlem worker Jesse B. Semple (e.g., Simple Speaks His Mind) cemented his popularity. Above all, Hughes was known for the hundreds of poems he penned voicing the anger, bravery, and wry irony of Black U.S. workers.

He also promoted the necessity for multiracial working-class internationalism. "Dreams" are, for Hughes, not idle imaginings, but expressions of actual human need. If indefinitely "deferred," however, a dream either "dr[ies] up like a raisin in the sun" or "explode[s]" ("Harlem"). (The poem inspired the title of Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 play, *A Raisin in the Sun*.) What is needed is a world "Where black or white, / Whatever race you be, / Will share the bounties of the earth/ And every man is free" ("I Dream a World").

Bosses censor his revolutionary side

What most people know—or think they know—about Hughes, however, has been warped by anticommunism. Grilled about some of his revolutionary poems of the 1930s ("Goodbye, Christ," "Good Morning, Revolution!", and "Put Another 'S' in the U.S.A.") he was hauled before Joseph McCarthy's notorious Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, in 1954. Hughes never "named names" or repudiated the Communist Party. But he increasingly engaged in self-censorship, ventriloquizing his sharpest criticisms of ruling-class red-baiting through the sardonic commentary of Jesse B. Semple and excluding all his Depression-era pro-communist poetry from the 1957 edition of his Selected Poems. Both Hughes the man and Hughes the poet were victims of the Cold War.

The political censorship of Hughes's pro-communism still continues in the selection of Hughes's works in the textbooks used in high school and college classrooms. The standard anthologies feature almost exclusively his 1920s blues- and jazz-inflected poems, such as "The Weary Blues," and works affirming the value and beauty of Negro identity, such as the essay "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," the short story "The Blues I'm Playing," and the poems "Mother to Son" ("Life for me ain't been no crystal stair") and "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" ("My soul has grown deep like the rivers").

The effect of selecting such texts and excluding his pro-communist, anti-capitalist works is to convert Hughes's revolutionary, class-based politics into a politics of Black cultural nationalism that overlooks the grounding of racism in capitalist social relations. The pro-communist Hughes is then made safe for the capitalist classroom. The Hughes who celebrated the achievements of Soviet socialism is expelled.

Weaknesses of old movement

Because of his closeness to the CPUSA, however, Hughes's works reflect not just its strengths but also its shortcomings. For instance, his ambiguous relationship to U.S. patriotism is linked to the CPUSA's view (especially pronounced during the era of the Popular Front Against Fascism (1936-1945)—of communism as "twentieth-century Americanism." In the frequently anthologized "I Too," the "darker brother" proclaims that he'll eventually be invited to the table from which he has been excluded because "they'll see how beautiful I am / And be ashamed . . . I, too, am America."

In "Let America Be America Again," there is a tug-of-war between two speakers, one readily assimilated to the American Dream, the other voicing the standpoint of those historically excluded ("the Negro . . . the poor white, . . . the red man . . . the immigrant") who proclaim, "America never was America to me." But the poem ends, "And yet I swear this oath—America will be!"

Here a liberal politics of inclusion—premised upon the extension of U.S. "democracy"—substitutes for the revolutionary view that U.S. capitalism is founded upon racist exploitation and division, and that only proletarian revolution can produce the "dream" of a better world.

Progressive Labor Party (its founding members broke away from the CPUSA in the early 1960s) has learned from the mistakes of the old communist movement. It is now clear that in the contradiction between nationalism and internationalism, communists must denounce nationalism in all forms. Nationalist politics only serve the interests of the capitalist ruling class.

Barack Obama's 2009 Inauguration speech is a case in point. Quoting Hughes, he asserted, "I too, am America," as well as in Martin Luther King's riffing on "Let America Be America Again" in several key speeches (Miller 2016, 2020).

Clearly, ruling class defenders have no trouble co-opting ideas when it suits them.

Undying commitment

Despite these ideological contradictions, Hughes's principal legacy is an undying commitment to the struggle against racism and the fight for an egalitarian communist future, one in which the blood-sucking "life robbers" of colonialism and imperialism will be overthrown by the "Red Armies of the international proletariat / Their faces, black, white, olive, yellow, brown . . . / Rais[ing] the blood-red flag that / Never will come down!" ("Always the Same"). Hughes was a poet laureate for the workers of the world.✪